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325 BC

1640 CE

1822 CE

1901 CE

2026 CE

Historically, Arsa (also spelled Ursa) served as the headquarters of the ancient Ursa Hazara Gujran Satrapy, encompassing the area of present-day Haripur. In 325 BC, following his conquest of the Aornos Fort — located at modern-day Mahaban or Wai-Hind/Hund — Alexander the Great appointed Sisikottos Khattana as the Governor of Aornos Hazara. This expansive administrative region comprised Purushapura, Wai-Hind, Hydaspes, Arsa Hazara Gujran, the foothills of the Himalayas in the Kohistan region, and portions of Kashmir. The chief king, Arsakes Gujjar, was retained as the local Governor of Ursa Hazara Gujran.

Xuanzang	<i>Chinese pilgrim & historian — referred to it as Ho-SA-LA or Gosala, which scholar Abdul Hai Habibi's "Heart Theory" translates as Hazara.</i>
Kalhana	<i>Author of Rajatarangini — uses the term Urasa for Hazara.</i>
Chechnya	<i>Historical connections link the name to the Khazar Khaganate.</i>
Vanit Nalwa	<i>In Hari Singh Nalwa—Champion of the Khalsaji, outlines the territorial boundaries of this ancient region.</i>

Arsa remained a central seat of power for centuries, serving as the heart of governance and culture across successive empires and dynasties. In 1822, the celebrated Sikh General Hari Singh Nalwa founded a new planned city upon the very grounds of the old headquarters, renaming it Haripur.

The city served as the administrative headquarters for both Hazara and Kashmir until 1849, when James Abbott, the Deputy Commissioner of the British East India Company, officially shifted the headquarters to Abbottabad — a city named in his own honour.

Year / Period	Event
<i>325 BC</i>	Alexander appoints Sisikottos Khattana as Governor of Aornos Hazara
<i>325 BC</i>	Arsakes Gujjar retained as local Governor of Ursa Hazara Gujjaran
<i>1822 CE</i>	Hari Singh Nalwa founds Haripur on the ancient Arsa grounds
<i>1822–1849</i>	Haripur serves as headquarters of Hazara and Kashmir
<i>1849 CE</i>	James Abbott shifts headquarters to Abbottabad

III. Chronology of the Festival

From Mela Zamindaran to Jashan-e-Hazara · 1640 to 2026

The cultural legacy of the region is perfectly mirrored in its historic festival, which has evolved across nearly four centuries through distinct and remarkable eras of governance, identity, and celebration.

a) The Inception and Evolution of Mela Zamindaran · 1640 to 1901

The cultural legacy of the region began in 1640 CE with the inception of Mela Zamindaran, a festival initiated at Arsa by Sardar Esa and Sardar Musa, the prominent chiefs of Dolta Bhedian. At the time, Sardar Musa was serving as the Governor of Hazara Gujjaran. For over two centuries — from 1640 to 1849 — the successive Satraps and rulers of the Hazara region continued to celebrate this annual festival on the traditional Hazara Arsa ground. This historic venue remained the centre of cultural gatherings until Hari Singh Nalwa founded Haripur at this exact location in 1822. Today, the ancient festival site serves as the ground for the City Police Station.

Following the advent of British rule, the festival underwent formal reorganisation. In 1901, the British Raj officially institutionalised the event, launching it under the new name "Horse and Cattle Show." For ninety years — spanning 1901 to 1991 — the festival remained under the strict administrative and logistical control of the District Council of Abbottabad.

As the event expanded, George Campbell Strahan Curtis, the then Deputy Commissioner of Hazara based in Abbottabad, recognised the need for a dedicated arena. Between 1939 and 1940, he oversaw the construction of the "Curtis Ground" in Haripur, built specifically to host the annual festivities and

accommodate the growing crowds.

b) The Modern Era — From Horse and Cattle Show to Jashan-e-Hazara · 1991 to 2026

Administrative shifts in 1991 transferred the management of the festival to the newly formed District Council of Haripur. From 1991 to 2007, the local council successfully sustained the event under its traditional title as the "Horse and Cattle Show." A major modernisation phase began in 2014 under the leadership of Provincial Minister for Communication Yousuf Ayub Khan, when the Haripur District Council rebranded the historic gathering as "Jashan-e-Hazara."

This modern era marked significant milestones, including the celebration of the 111th Raja Nasir Kiyani Mela Jashn-e-Hazara at the Curtis Ground in 2019. To accommodate its ever-increasing scale, the venue was eventually shifted from the historic Curtis Ground to the Pak-China Factory Ground for the celebration of the 113th Mela Jashan-e-Hazara, scheduled for May 22–24, 2026.

Festival Chronology at a Glance

Era / Year	Name & Administration	Venue
<i>1640–1849</i>	<i>Mela Zamindaran (Sardar Musa & Sardar Esa)</i>	<i>Arsa / Haripur ground</i>
<i>1901–1991</i>	<i>Horse and Cattle Show (District Council Abbottabad)</i>	<i>Curtis Ground, Haripur</i>
<i>1939–1940</i>	<i>Curtis Ground constructed (G.C.S. Curtis, ICS, DC Hazara)</i>	<i>Haripur</i>
<i>1991–2013</i>	<i>Horse and Cattle Show (District Council Haripur)</i>	<i>Curtis Ground, Haripur</i>
<i>2014 onward</i>	<i>Jashan-e-Hazara (Yousuf Ayub Khan, Provincial Minister)</i>	<i>Curtis Ground, Haripur</i>
<i>2019</i>	<i>111th Raja Nasir Kiyani Mela Jashn-e-Hazara</i>	<i>Curtis Ground</i>
<i>May 22–24, 2026</i>	<i>113th Mela Jashan-e-Hazara</i>	<i>Pak-China Factory Ground</i>

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